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>> five, six, seven, eight, nine, 10, 11 -- good, thanks.

>> Good morning, we're going to get started, it's the Montana responsibility to -- the planning committee never imagined we would have so many people come to a place so far away from the rest of the country, so difficult to fly into. My biggest fear is you wouldn't be able to buy an airplane ticket because there aren't enough airplanes that come here in two or three days, but, wrong. We're very happy to see you here, and on behalf of the parents and the staff and the administration of my school, that's the Montana school for the deaf and blind, school administrators, welcome.

>> I am also very pleased that the summit planning committee decided to again join this conference with the -- the conference later this week, a special opportunity for Montana. We will probably never again in the future have this many people associated with deaf education. It is spring, Rachel was asking about snow. It won't happen here, but just South of here. Now that I said that, it will probably snow this afternoon.

>> You know, the title of this conference, Systems Change, educating children who are deaf or hard hearing, quality control in our education systems. This is something that's very important for Montana right now. We are in the process of revising our strategic plan for our school. We just recently had a meeting with the constituent groups from all over Montana that have a stake in the education of Deaf Ed education. We have a opportunity to learn from all of you with stakes who worked through processes of planning and implementation of improved services for your children. In Montana, a little information about us, MSDB serves 140 children in our outreach program. Those KIDS are in 68 different school districts around the state. Montana is 559-miles wide, like driving from Chicago to Philadelphia. Those kids are scattered out, about an average of one child per each 1000 square miles. It's a large job for consultants. There's only five school districts with more than 10 deaf or hard of hearing children in that school. So about half of these kids are educated alone in their LEAs. Our challenge here is to find and recruit people with the skill and knowledge to work with our children. So, having professionally trained teachers is a huge issue for us here. People that can work with the kids directly in their classrooms, and from the school's perspective it doesn't matter to us where

the kids are attending school, it's the responsibility to assist, provide technical assistance and support to those schools.

>> We have 40 deaf and hard of hearing children that attend our school here in Great Falls. I would say here in Montana, though we have these big challenges, the thing, I guess, that I am probably the most proud of is that in my time as superintendent, and prior to that we always had a good relationship with the office of public instruction and the local school districts, even though we don't have a lot of resources with money or people, we do have a great respect for each other. We have very good cooperative relationships, and that's the thing that allows us to work together to improve, plan, and implement better services.

>> The information that's presented here over the next two days, I hope is very beneficial for all of you, that you enjoy your time here, and that together we are able to develop better understand of what the needs are for kids and how we can do a better job of providing those services, and most importantly, the thing I learned, that it's all about relationships, and if we can have clear communication and develop strong relationships, that's the foundation for improving what we do in our jobs as school administrators and as teams working to serve our children.

>> Again, welcome to Big Sky Country. Enjoy your time here, again we appreciate you making this trip in on little airplanes to Great Falls.

>> I am Tim Harris, the state Special Education -- on behalf of my boss, I would like to extend a welcome to everyone here. First, I want to explain the name tags. They are like our governor, no, he doesn't have a plastic face, but he loves to wear a Bolla tie, and if you feel like joining in with our governor, feeling at home, right here in Montana, you can do this with your name tag, and we would love it.

>> Steve did mention, this is the Big Sky country, the mountain state, a number of nicknames, the last best place, one of my favorites. I also think of it as the land of the four seasons. When you are lucky in Montana you can experience all four in one day. If it you are here long enough you will see all four. I am not so sure it won't snow. I heard on the weather last night that it was supposed to. Hopefully it won't. Yes, flying into Montana is an adventure you can tell your grandkids. Flying out of here is the same kind of adventure. It's typical to fly on a small jet, or the really lucky ones, the 18-seat prop plane you have to bend down to get on to the airplane. But it's a great state, 145,000 square miles, 140,000 children, we will talk more about those challenges today.

>> Steve alluded to how we have worked together over as many years as I have been in the state, which is 1973, 35 years, and I go back to the days of Floyd McDowell, you may remember him, the superintendent here way back, long time ago. Steve is another in a long list of excellent administrators, someone we have always been able to talk with, work with, deal with, coop cooperate with, collaborate with. Because of our size, because of our sparse population, if we don't do that, we won't survive. Kids with low incidence types of disabilities, hearing impairment, vision impairment, others, hearing impairment we are here today to talk about; if we don't collaborate, kids won't receive types of services that are appropriate, let alone really excellent services. For us at times it's a struggle to get just appropriate services. We may have one deaf child in Garfield county, 1500 square miles, maybe bigger, might be 2500 square miles, a population of 1300. There may be one deaf child in the county, six one-room schools in that county. The challenges for user immense. If you are lucky enough to live in a big city, of course how many of those -- we have one big city -- nearly 100,000, the rest of our big cities are in the 30 to 50 or 60,000 range. If you are lucky enough to live in one of those cities, communities, services will be available, but if you are lucky enough to live where there are few people, the sky is clear, the air is clear, and you love being there, you have a child with deafness, you may have some difficulties, and that's why we're here. Just not here

today in this place, but why Steve is here, why I'm hereof, here, why all the folks in Montana are here to meet the needs of kids.

>> One more time, on behalf of Linda, our superintendent, hope you enjoy your stay and the conference is successful. Thank you.

>> APPLAUSE.

>> Hi, my name is Glenna Patton, I am a sixth generation Montanan. My joke is always if we were flat we would be bigger than Texas, a very large state. I am a mother, parent, I have seven children, raised Irish Catholic, 14 year old was born profoundly deaf. I am from the winter part of the state. I drove through four or five feet of snow. We in Bozeman are next to Yellowstone park, two large ski resorts, a mountainous town. We sometimes skip spring, go right to summer, June 30, somewhere in there. I am so glad to be here, and I brought a few facts about Montana, I was raised on a ranch, one of the small communities, graduated in a class of seven, my cousins, a very small community. I went to Montana state U university, graduated with interior design, I travel extensively out of the state, Atlanta, for interior parts, furniture marts. I was so happy to be called to represent my state, be a part of this. Last night I just met tons of wonderful, intelligent, so knowledgeable, I feel like I am always looking for more information, and great energy last night. I want to thank everybody for coming, welcome to Montana. I am looking forward to bringing a little bit of the knowledge you brought, spreading it through Montana. Thank you very much.

>> APPLAUSE.

>> Welcome, welcome to the circle, back to the circle of communication. Sort of like a Pow-Wow, we all come together to talk together, to listen to one another, to learn from one another. This is our fourth summit, fourth time of coming together to share what we've learned, to share our successes, to share our issues and challenges, and to problem-solve together. This is a time to come together to listen to one another, to be open to new learning, so when we go back to each of our own individual corners of the Earth we can take with us new insights, so that we can continue to improve the education of children with, youth, young adults with deafness or hard of hearing. I am Carol Massanari with the Mountain Plains -- here to represent the resource center program. I want to take time to go over agenda, review before we get into our program. First, I really need to acknowledge all of the great people who have made this happen. This was a real team effort. Bear with me as I mention everyone.

>> First of all, this year on our planning team we decided to add people who represented the state that we were going to. So Steve Gettel and -- Department of Education became part of team member, great experience to have somebody here in Great Falls be able to come up, give insights to the --

>> Then we had state representatives from the State Departments, Frank Nesbitt, Nancy, Rachel Ragin, and I know Cheryl Johnson, we think of her as Colorado Department of Ed. Representing that point of view, working hard to put together break-out sessions.

>> LeeAnne Seaver, our tireless parent representative, of course was always there to remind us of the importance of the parent voice. We added Cheri Dowling also, who is one of the best workers, she just -- I can't give her enough to do, but great contribution to our team.

>> We also have representing for CEASD, Robert Hill and Joseph Finigan. Special thanks for continued support, not only in contribution to the planning, but financial contribution to this summit. So thank you very much to CEASD. APPLAUSE.

>> Cathy McCloud and Mary Mar Sen represented PEPNet, another technical assistance provider, funded out of the Office of Special Education Programs. Cathy and Mary have been doing a tremendous job of pulling together the interpreters, making certain we have quality interpreters, and also providing some funding support and bringing together a transition team

that you will be able to hear from in one of our breakout sections, thank you Cathy for representing PEPNet.

>> I cannot get by without mentioning our new partners, office of special Office of Special Education Programs, the research to practice of O ACCEPT, and Richard -- the monitoring state improvement program. Because Louise came last year to the summit and went back with such energy, enthusiasm, she was able to get us a little money to help support the summit, so thank you Louise. APPLAUSE.

>> Rich was unable to be here because this is the time of the year when the OS EP staff are reviewing state performance plans, so he's got his head into annual performance reports.

>> Also, if you will notice on the back of your agenda, I did put our contributors, but I failed to put three very important contributions to the summit on the agenda. That is the New Mexico school, the Arizona school and the Montana school, for providing us with an interpreter. They each brought, Montana brought two, Arizona brought an extra interpreter just to be part of our program, as well as New Mexico, so thank you to Ron, Steve and to Robert for your contribution.

>> Finally, I need to also thank Caption Colorado, for they are providing the captioning service, and we really wanted to try to do, within a rural state part of our emphasis is rural education, so we are demonstrating technology. So the captioning is actually being done somehow through technology, anyway, you know. It's here. It's magic.

>> So let's take a couple minutes to review the agenda. I also want to thank you all for your indulgence, patience, you notice we switched the room to make it easier to see for the interpreters. I am afraid Montana and the colleagues will have a hard time seeing the PowerPoint. It just is one of those things you have to work with when you have -- we can't move the walls, have to live with the walls.

>> So again, we are coming here, this is the time for you to come and learn from each other. What you get out of it will be what you've put into it. I would invite you to be fully present, fully participant, to share what you know from your truth, your experiences in the small group sessions; to pay attention to what has heart and meaning for you. To put your odes on ideas on the table, but be able to step back from them to generate, spin new ideas. The purpose is to be able to connect with others across the country. That really got started last night, and I hope you -- I know you are meeting old friends, hope you all also meet new friends while you are here. We hope to get into some issues that are important issues and also to present both research as well as practical experience around those issues.

>> We also want you to be working as a team and to form, if this is the first time you are together as a team to sort of be thinking about how can we keep this going, if you are here as a team from past, then how to strengthen your team and what do you need to be doing differently. We also want to emphasize rural and small school systems, so tomorrow's whole morning plenary session will be on rural delivery.

>> We then also want to make sure that you have a opportunity to continue to assess your own progress toward the national goals. I should mention, wanted to mention, there are 30 states in this room, plus New Zealand. This is the first time -- APPLAUSE -- we are actually going international. So, I think that's great.

>> This morning we will start with a panel presentation, with North Carolina, a team to share their experiences. We will take a break. Then have another panel of colleagues, experts, to give us some of the challenges and some of the strategies for working collaboratively. This afternoon we will break into four plenary sessions. If you recall last year we had the open space. We still want to encourage the conversations, but we have a little more structure

today, so we have four topics, and what I need to give you is where those topics or break out sessions will be because I forgot to put them on the agenda. My bad.

>> The right person for the job. Let me back up. This room will be divided into three rooms. That far part of the room will be the -- room. If you go to the back, the hall way, the names are on the outside of the doors, okay. So Aaron son room, that's where the right person for the job will be. Trail's End will be on that side of the room, where we will have the research and recommended practices in deaf Deaf education, and in the back room, what it takes to make a smooth transition. I am delighted the transition team chose to bring an actual student with them.

>> The -- room will be where -- just across the hall way. It's all here in this space, but over lunch we will divide these rooms. That means there is time at 10:45, I believe, 11:45 for state teams to meet. I would like to encourage you to actually head down to the pool area, find a table of the state team, down by the pool. We will have lunch down by the pool room again. That way the sooner they can get in here and break up this room, have to break this front podium up, platform apart, because of the move. So if we can move our state teams down to the poolside that will be very helpful. The state team time is for you as a state team to work on what your needs are. There is a form in your packet, as a sample for action planning guide, if you want to use it. If you have your own action plan, or a different format, you are welcome to use your own format. But it's there for you to use in a way that works for you.

>> Tomorrow morning we will have breakfast again in the poolroom, then poolside, here for our plenary session on providing education to students in rural areas.

>> If you need anything, I will be out at the registration desk, do my best to do whatever I can to make this the best meeting possible for all of us. Thank you very much, and welcome.

>> APPLAUSE.

>> Good morning. My name is Cheri Dowling, I am with the American Society for Deaf Children, the parent representative on the Maryland team. The Summit it is dedicated to creating a environment where parties work together to result in collaborative education for children who are deaf and hard of hearing, you are asked to invite stakeholders to participate on your team, State Department Department of Education, higher education representatives, parents, other critical stakeholders. Your teams are as diverse as the children you serve. It's sometimes difficult to put differences together to work collaboratively. We can do this. As you are working together we want you all to remember you need to respect everyone's opinions, everyone is important, respect everyone on your teams. Please keep an open mind as you are working; think out of the box sometimes. We want you to laugh a little, and we really want to you have fun. Our next presentation is a team that's actually done all that. I am honored to introduce to you Dr. Rachel Ragin, where is she?

>> She's been the -- from the North Carolina Department of Public instruction.

>> Rachel Ragin: Good morning. Give our team just a few minutes to get up here.

>> We have a huge team, but actually, we have around 40 altogether, so this is just part of our group. I would like to take the quick opportunity to introduce the people that are on our team here today. I am Rachel Ragin, from the Department of Public instruction in North Carolina, their consultant for Deaf deaf education and audiology. On my right, can't pronounce, so I am going to be safe and say Wendy Kay.

>> And Wendy is the mother of an adorable little boy, in a mainstream program. Jim Dunn, a lead teacher in the early intervention program, in North Carolina. Next is Janet McDaniels, director of N CSD. Reggie Redding, the director of EN CSD, the two schools for the deaf in North Carolina. Cathy rose is the assistant superintendent of state schools in North Carolina,

which would include some other schools as well. Then Robin Honesly, a teacher from a rural area, we felt that was important to bring that voice to the Summit. So that's our team.

>> We started in 2004, school year, that year I had attended the first Summit, and I had to beg to get in the door because I hadn't registered, and thank you Cheryl, for letting me in. Then I had to think a lot when it was over, it was so exciting, there were so many ideas, now what do I do? So I felt that the national agenda, especially for you guys just starting your planning with a blueprint, it was a guide, it gave us some direction.

>> I also felt it was important when creating our team that we brought voices to the table. That we made decisions in a very Democratic way, which meant that we were all equal. So, we finally pulled together, and we began discussing the national agenda itself. We came up with a name, North Carolina CARE, communication and access rights in education, for children who are deaf or hard of hearing. It's composed of over 35 members, however, I will tell you, I add people all the time. If someone says I want to do something with that, I am interested in that, or I feel they have something to contribute, they are added. I am always adding parents, because they keep us real.

>> Just to give you a little brief summary of who is in this group. We have parents, we have teachers from schools for the deaf and mainstream programs. I try to hit on mode, language, make sure all of those voices were there. We have people from office of education services, where Cathy and Reggie and Janet are right now. We have people from the Department of Public instruction, VR, mental health, the EDDIE program. NCAD and the North Carolina hearing loss association. We have North Carolina RID as well, didn't put that up there. Other organization in North Carolina that touch children. So really, we wanted to go beyond high school. We wanted to make sure that we were considering the transition pieces as well, that's why we included VR.

>> Whose -- all of us. Nobody is leader in this group. We have coordinators, I feel like I am a coordinator. Decisions are made in a Democratic way.

>> When we first started, we hired Larry Segal, with the national deaf education project to bring the vision to our state, because of the underpinnings of the national agenda, and he had that vision. So Larry and I worked very closely together to get the group started and to facilitate that group, he was just an enormous asset for us, still is today.

>> We divided the goals, the eight goals and we divided the larger group into eight work groups, and tried to make sure we had good representation from different folks in those groups. Then we took all the sub-goals and I developed a grid, we looked at three things. Where are we now? Where are our gaps? And what are our recommendations?

>> We have to be honest, folks. We have to be able to admit where our gaps are. That's hard for people sometimes, and people in that first meeting were kind of defensive. There were folks that were defensive of their programs, but over time we developed that feeling of safety, hopefully, that everywhere felt okay about sharing where their gaps are. I think we are there now, very much so.

>> Right now we are developing our report, it's due out very soon, I am actually in the middle of writing it, a little more research on what our kids look like in North Carolina, will be published soon, and I will be posting that on our page, with the exceptional children's division.

>> But, this is a living document, because things change. It's the one thing you can depend on. So, it's not something that you just do and it's finished, it should be something that's a process. Probably one of the most challenging things is building outside support of what you are doing in your task force, and it requires a lot of work, but slow and steady wins the race.

>> With that, I am going to turn it over to Jen, she's going to talk to you about what's going on with early intervention and preschool programs.

>> Good morning. Thank you for having us, and thank you for allowing me to stay seated. I had two fears when I came, one is standing up and talking in front of a group. The other is standing in front of a group and holding my stomach in. One thing is taken care of. I am with the early intervention program in North Carolina. I would like to talk about our goal for early intervention and preschool, our current model, our weaknesses and our strengths. Weaknesses probably should be gaps, it's the new buzz words now. So -- here Rachel.

>> Sorry. Right now, what our goal is, the machine the we minute we can, as soon as children are born we want to make sure they are screened, identified, parents are given information, unbiased information, and we want to make sure services are started as quickly as possible. We want to do this to ensure our children have age-appropriate linguistic development, communication skills, cognitive skills and social skills. We want to do this in a family-focused, child-centered and for the young ones, we want to do it in their natural environment.

>> While she's doing that, I will talk. Currently in North Carolina we have the new born hearing screenings, children are screened, diagnosed, screening about 95% of the births in North Carolina, so there's a 5% gap. We are doing the screening, getting children diagnosed, and we're reporting the information to the state lab in North Carolina. We have child health audiology consultants that work with families, they are referring the children with hearing loss to the children's developmental services agency, the CDS A, the single portal of entry for not only deaf and hard of hearing children, but any 0 to 3 children with disabilities or at risk. After that the CD sai will appoint a service coordinator for children and families, go out, make a visit, make a referral to the early intervention program, they make a referral to Beginnings for parents of children who are deaf or hard of hearing. The CDS A, early intervention program, Beginnings and the CHAT, child health audiology -- will begin services, the early intervention program is the organization that does the services. Chat will go in, help families as needed, Beginnings is there to provide support. Early intervention goes out, does services. We altogether, those four agencies, get together, write the ISSP for the children. Sometimes in the referral process, maybe the CDSA doesn't get a family. Children don't have to be enrolled in the CDSA to get early intervention services from our agency, the early intervention program for the deaf. But hopefully they do go through there, they get coordination services, very important when they transition at age three. At age 2 the program will make a referral to DPI, the LEAs, for a transition at age 3. Then at 2 years, 3 months, the CDSA gets together with the school system, begins the transition process. So hopefully at age 3 transition is very natural, smooth and goes well.

>> A little history in approximate North Carolina, around the year 2000 we had a lot of changes. We used to have early intervention and pre-school, 0 to 5, in the schools for the deaf. In 2000, when we started doing new born screening the legislators decided we would get an influx of children the schools for the deaf would not be able to handle. They took the 3 to 5-year-olds out - year-olds out of the system. And they within the to DPI. That was a hard transition, we have a mother here who went through that. They took the early intervention program out of the schools of the deaf, and they also closed the central school for the deaf. We had three schools for the deaf in North Carolina and they closed one. So in 2000 we had a lot of changes, it's been hard for a lot of people. They still think, a lot of people, 0 to 5 should be served under one roof. It was an excellent program. We got a lot more children through new born screening, probably not the number they were thinking, but we probably could have worked through the numbers. But nevertheless, that was the change. So two separate programs in North Carolina.

>> So we will talk about some strengths in our program. When I talk about the strengths I am going to divide them up 0 to 2, and 3 to five, because it's easier, just two separate programs, our strengths are very different.

>> So, in the early intervention program, one of our strengths is we are one program, we are in the office of education services division in Department of Health and human services. We have one director and the three regions, we have three regions, the central, western and eastern regions, and we have staff meetings together, have the directors and lead teachers get together monthly at least. We're always e-mailing when there's a problem that comes up, e-mailing, calling each other, what do you do in this situation. It's a very strong supportive program and we feel we are very consistent in the state on the services we are providing. We also have all of our teachers in early intervention, licensed teachers of the deaf.

>> We also have what we think is a very extensive, thorough assessment protocol, and I have a slide that will show that in a little bit. The CDSA, the children's developmental agency, we don't do that unless it's missing, we have a protocol that assesses speech, language, audition, signing skills, and do assessments every six months, written reports every six months, they coin side with the ISSP meeting dates.

>> Our teachers are also involved, well, teacher and staff, involved in local coordinating councils, I don't know if other states have them, but that's agencies that get together monthly and discuss what's going on in the community to help 0 to 5 children, social services, us, services for the blind, a lot of different agencies that work with that, age group. It's very informative, and keeps everybody on top of who to make the appropriate referrals to, and also helps with networking when we have children getting ready to transition at age 3.

>> We also have an early intervention, a very strong parent training and support network. In early intervention we go into the homes, and child care centers, work with parents. We want parents to be their child's best teacher. We know we can't be in there 24/7, but that's where the parents are. We focus on training parents to work with their children, whether it be a spoken language or sign language.

>> We also work collaboratively, all sorts of agencies that work with this age population, and we do an excellent job of that, I think. Like I said, we encourage parents to be their child's best teacher. All communication options are available, and they're respected. We work with parents on what they've decided to do with their children. We're there to help guide them, we're there to help if they decide something isn't working, we will try something else. And Beginnings does a very good job of this. They go in initially, talk to parents about what the options are for communication. Once that decision is made, our teachers in early intervention respect and work with the parents on where they are and where they want to go.

>> We also make sure at age 3, when children are transitioning, sometimes the machine the they minute they wake up on third birthday, services are not in place in the public school. The developmental services drop children at age three, required to do that, they are out the door. For us in early intervention, we make sure services are completely in place, sometimes summer birthdays, early intervention is a 12-month program. School systems are off for the summer. So early intervention makes sure we stay in there, work with those children until their IEPs have been written and they are ready to be implemented.

>> We also, not on the slide, but we also provide our services in natural environments. We go into homes, child care centers, wherever it's natural for a child of that age to be. We have the appropriate staff to meet the needs of these children, we have sign language teachers, social workers, teachers of the deaf, communication or facilitators and Spanish interpreters.

>> This is a copy of our protocol, what to do at the initial assessment, then what to do every six months, what to do at transition. As I said -- If I could interject, I will be posting

that on our website. I did not bring copies, but I would be happy to post it, give you the address.

>> Thank you.

>> Okay, so, with our 3 to 5- year-old services, here are some of our strengths. The LEAs are making sure that IEPs are written by the child's third birthday. There's been a federal mandate that happens, and North Carolina was 100% in getting that done. The timeline for implementing those services is pretty close to 100%, not quite 100%, but pretty close. We think that's a real strength, that the children are getting in there, getting served. Still, summer is a little iffy, not a 12-month program, they don't have to start services in the summer.

>> The larger LEAs have a variety of services to offer to children. That's a strength when you look at the rural counties where there may not be but one child, or may not be any children. I do a report every month for early intervention, and we got, on referrals in counties, North Carolina has 100 counties, and I got a referral in a county that I haven't seen a child come through in two years. So when that child becomes 3, I don't know what that LEA is going to do, because it's one child, and how do you provide the right personnel to do that? Anyway, the larger counties it's not so much a problem. The Charlotte area, Raleigh, Greensboro. Some of the smaller counties have pretty good services, but a rural county -- we don't have to fly anybody anywhere in North Carolina, but it is difficult. We are talking about - - I will get back to that.

>> Is it the larger counties usually have an easier time of recruiting teachers, probably they have teacher supplements that are higher than a lot of other places, so the pay is greater. There's also critical mass, so it's job security. There's also the critical mass also allows for the children to have language models, and friends, especially for the signing children. When the school for the deaf in Greensboro closed our biggest concern was who will be friends to these children? We knew educationally they would be okay, but socially would they? We were sending children back to counties with only one child in the county and who was going to be her friend. So with the larger counties that's not so much a problem.

>> Also, as far as the teachers go, there's, when you have larger counties the teachers know they will probably be working with deaf children. If you are in a county with only one or two children you don't know if you will have extra bus duty or cafeteria duty. They try to find things for teachers to do, so with the larger counties that's good for the teachers, they are doing what they went to school to do.

>> State-wide North Carolina, another strength, three universities in three geographical areas that have education of the deaf programs. We have five universities that offer interpreting degrees. Many of the larger communities have a very strong family -- my cue -- I think. We have -- she put a watch in front of me if you didn't see it. We also have very strong parent support groups in the larger communities, that helps parents get together, network, and compare notes and learn to advocate for their child. We will move on.

>> Gaps. We have a lot of them. North Carolina has a lot of rural areas, they don't have the critical mass of children. This effects the appropriate language models for children of signing and also trained personnel for all children, whether spoken language or sign language. The 3- year-olds transition into one of 115 LEAs who have no systematic way of providing services. Many of the LEAs are, regardless of the needs of the children, they are providing services that they have, not what the children need.

>> We still think the 3-to-5- year-old parents are not empowered enough, even though the 0 to 3, we work hard to get them empowered, they still are intimidated by a large system and by a lot of different professionals.

>> Then there's 5% of the children that aren't getting tested, we have children moving in from out of state, progressive hearing loss, late onset deafness, all sorts of children still falling through the cracks. We need a systematic way of identifying those children. In early intervention, our strengths are also our weaknesses. We provide services that are family-driven, but asking families to make decisions about their children for the rest of their lives and sometimes they are not ready to do it. Sometimes they don't know what decision to make as far as communication. Also, we are doing this in the natural setting. We go into a child's home we don't have a right to control that environment. We have kids running in and out, siblings taking toys, have all sorts of noise, washing machine, telephone, and we honestly cannot compete with the Young and the Restless. We have to make sure we are getting in there, getting it done. It was easier when children came to us.

>> Collaborating with other professionals that don't understand what it is that we do. Okay. Also, just personnel, LEAs, and ISP teams that don't understand what it is we are working on. We will be given ISPs with goals written for us, may be a child with signing skills or vice versa, just a person not knowing.

>> Usually early early intervention teachers are not invited, have kids three years, don't want our input. We are working hard to get that done. There's no systematic way to identify the children once they have been identified at birth.

>> Often LEAs don't share their resources. We have some school systems with three LEAs within the county and they won't serve each other's children, and that's too bad. We have a large population of Spanish-speaking families, and the debate about how best to serve those children still goes on, native language -- so --

>> Then our medical community, sometimes doctors still don't recognize hearing loss. Sometimes they are giving parents bad information, your children are just ignoring you. They are doing better, but we need to get out there. So recommendations. For families, we want to continue to screen, identify, provide information services as soon as possible after birth, and we want to provide them with unbiased and complete information. We want families to receive ongoing training, support their choices, and we want them to be able to learn, the one's signing, we want to be supportive, get them to learn sign to have a complete language they are giving their child. We want them to be connected with others who use the same modality, and those who don't, so they can get a big picture.

>> Okay, we also want the -- the biggest thing is develop regional pre-schools like we used to have. We want critical masses of children for the 3 to five-year-olds, writing, implementing IEPs. Rachel and a group worked on a resource guide for parents that's completed, we just need to get it published, out there. We want to also increase the public understanding of the children we work with, the CDSAs we work with early on, public schools, we want everybody to have a better understanding of the children.

>> Then educational entities, providing information and training to the medical communities, important to get out, continue to do that. And I think that's it, I am going to turn this over to Reggie Redding.

>> Reggie Redding: Good morning. It's always nice to be able to see -- I am going to stay here. It's nice to be able to see -- all right -- is this okay? Thanks, nice to see old friends, be able to meet new friends, nice to be here in Montana. You know why, I was growing up, I learned black people don't come to Montana. The reason why? We come to see the diversity, the more colored cows, more diversity in cows than in the people of Montana. I don't know if that's true or not, but okay.

>> Now, I am supposed to be talking about communication, language, reading, in seven minutes. I don't know if I can. I have 25 minutes left to go there's an awful lot of slides, I will jump along through the whole scroll of slides. Talking about the appropriate rights and human

rights to communication and language skills, all children should have that, deaf children as well.

>> Some really important bullet points, assessment, accessibility and development. Those three you need to have e. if you don't have a language foundation, then there after you will be lagging behind and you will be delayed. Now, talking about North Carolina in general, Deaf deaf education, public school system, in general. The access to communication, there's a wide variety. There's oral schools, ASL -- no real consistency. Choices are dependent on locale. They will decide what they want, if there's an oral program, the family has to go along with it. LEA. We have 115 school districts, deaf students scattered throughout. Mainstream scat -- in over 200 public schools. Most communication level is at a very basic level.

>> We do have technology, but whether we use it or not, we don't really use it that well, it's not really that effective.

>> Now, while we do have -- kids we don't know them well enough to know what their needs are. We don't know what the communication skills or preferences are, and we need a better collaboration from one edge, from the East Coast all the way to the western border. We are not doing that now. Assessment is very important. Knowledge gives us information we need. Whether we know if a child is ready for school, the communication readiness. Now, the law requires full coverage, but we're limited in that scope. Now we have 115 school districts, almost 70% of those have students, less than 10 students in each district. Here you can see the correlation, maybe 25% have 11 to 25 students in the district. In the yellow bar, maybe 18%, here 21 to 40 students in the district. The white bar maybe 80%, we have 41 to 70 students in the district, remainder in the black bar of 45% with 71 or above. That's really the critical mass, and it just isn't sufficient. So many people are so scattered throughout the state.

>> LEAs, we really don't have a lot of them, and we are trying to just deal with things on a hand-to-mouth basis. Some deaf people that are put in very remote areas, sometimes grouped together, just not a very good fit. What we need is to have training and support, and we need to have a lot of them trained, evaluated. Many people, many deaf students don't sign. They just depend on their interpreters, but they don't have really qualified interpreters in the classrooms.

>> Reading is important. Strong communication skills, language skills, ties into reading as well. It's clear deaf students are lagging behind the hearing student population. Change has got to happen if we want to see an improvement. The status quo, business as usual, going along is not good, we have to make a change. These are the three different documents that do support that. We are thinking about recommending these changes. And we will elaborate on each of these.

>> Now, we need to start an early assessment. We need to develop a communication profile that will follow the student all the way K through 12. All IEPs need to be clearly defined as to what the communication levels are. Currently you look and the information isn't there. How we can better support each individual student for the language development. We have a scarcity of interpreters and need to bring qualified interpreters into the school system. Students need to be grouped together to have a peer group, and teachers fluent in sign.

>> Some classes, got a 5-year old and 10 year old in the same class, we need appropriate peer groups.

>> Thank you very much.

>> APPLAUSE.

>> Real quickly, to talk about collaborative partnerships.

>> Rachel Ragin: We have different collaboration we need to -- certainly collaboration among agencies, organization, but there's a need for collaboration between those and teachers, teachers and parents, a lot of different lenses to look through for collaboration. Our biggest problem in North Carolina right now is transition. 3 to 5 year old services, we are looking closely at those issues.

>> Most important thing is we want to build connections with people, the more connected, the more we talk, the more conversations we have, the more we find that we are probably more alike than we are different, and things tend to move a little better that way.

>> We have to look at our continuum of services, they are extreme right now. You are either excluded or at school for the deaf, we don't have enough options in between. We are really having to look at that. I think it's essentially collaborate between public schools and schools for the deaf to develop a nice continuum of services.

>> Winy is going to give a quick talk about her perspective as a parent.

>> Hi. Early intervention in the state was our saving grace. Our son was diagnosed just after he was two, implanted within several months, following the protocol. Our early intervention system, we got caught up in that change in procedures. It was 0 to 5. When we were faced with the reality of going to the public school system, actually, I fell apart at the meeting because we were only given two options and both were not appropriate options for our son. Luckily, Jen was there at the meeting with us, as well as the compliance officer, also the attorney for the school system, as my husband watched me get more and more upset through the procedure, he halted, said what is best for this child. That is at core for everything. I think the focus needs to be what the child needs, we build from that point forward. Whatever the option. It is market driven, what the parent chooses, and as a state, as leaders of the state, we need to make sure those resources of trained personnel, all of that, is in place for the child. The child-focused, not dependent on the logistics, we can work it all out. We were allowed to stay within the early intervention program for one more year and I think it's made all the difference in the world. Not just that, they helped us, have continued to help us through the process as we have questions. I am finding as we move through the process, our son is now 10, we are training others as we go through the process in the school districts. We got a program started that didn't exist before, and exists now, services a wide variety of people. There are glitches in everything, we can get it, do it, work together to get every single child what they need.

>> APPLAUSE.

>> I am going to try to see the slides from over here, but basically this is the stuff that everybody deals with. The logistics you have to do. North Carolina has developed the communication profile for the IEP, but has not been mandated in our new state procedures. That's something we continue to work on, to mandate the use of that communication profile in the IEP. We need more placements, a lot available, need a lot more. The programs for training on our Deaf and hard of hearing teachers, we have three of those in the state. But we have a need for those teachers and the teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing is a microcosm of our need for teachers period, in a state growing as rapidly as North Carolina has been, and projected to continue to grow, everything we experience in the deaf and hard of hearing community is a microcosm of what we experience across the state in terms of need. That continues to be a problem for services.

>> We have a lot of services already available to train teachers across the state. We continue to need more. People come in, as you know, all of us getting closer and closer to retirement, can see the carrot hanging out there are excited to train others to come in, train others to take our place, who are aware, understand how things work. It's critical. Rachel?

>> Rachel Ragin: Our biggest room is room for improvement, I will talk a lot about our gaps. We have always been a state focused on what else we need. That is no different for this experience.

>> We have a lack of leadership in accountability issues. If you know a lot about accountability for school-age students, you know North Carolina has been in the top five for developing the test, test protocol. That's great, if numbers are all you care about. We care about children, care about how children learn and how they show what they've learned, and a standardized test will only get a piece of that. A standardized test where you have signs not consistent with the signs used in the classroom, material you have used all year long, not using a test normed for children who are deaf and hard of hearing, not having a national standard to measure yourself against. North Carolina, we measure ourselves against each other from year to year in our accountability, not a nationally normed test. A lot of those issues continue to be there, and knowing the appropriate standards and tests for students who are deaf hard of hearing continues to be a problem, and selling that to the gurus in the state, I am sure all of you experience the same thing. We have never wanted to leave children behind, but we think we have different ways that can assess their learning and show us better what they do know, and I think that goes for all children.

>> Accountability issues tend to drive everything for exceptional children. We lack that awareness of alternative testing. We use the same test in North Carolina for all of our exceptional children, as well as non-disabled peers. Gateways, promotions are driven primarily by test results, not by portfolio examination or looking at what students have proven over and over again. We run again into the language issue, students always tested on grade level, at a level for content where their language lags behind the content they are being exposed to. We get a lot of students, frankly, from out of the country, we have the fastest-growing Spanish speaking population in the country. We get a lot of students, 10, 11, old as 16 who have never been in school, have no language, and our state testing system ignores that reality, and we are asked to put those children directly into a classroom and begin teaching them content where they have no language. That does not work. Frustration, behavior problems, self-esteem, all of those become major issues. These are the realities that those of us who work with people on the frontlines every day see the reality and impact that makes. So my job, Rachel's job, the job of all of us here is to try to help power that's be understand those realities, find different ways to work with them.

>> What do we need now? Boy, we could make a big long list here. We are really interested in the mandatory use of the communication profile with the IEP. That is essential. Differentiation of testing protocol based on that profile is essential. More formal research with students with hearing loss, progress on mandated testing, the program available. That is a major dearth in our state despite the fact we have a major university system. Then access, equal access to all kinds of programming. Rachel mentioned gaps in services, we have residential schools, mainstream programs, we need the options in between, and the opportunity to look at more regionalization. North Carolina, believe it or not, despite what you hear about Raleigh, research triangle, and Charlotte, is an incredibly rural state. Shows us again what we knew, if you are in a rural, economically depressed area your access to service is different than someone in a large metropolitan year. I didn't need another study to tell me that, sure you didn't either.

>> Of course we need more training. All the school personnel involved with students who are deaf or hard of hearing need to understand more about the issues the population faces, the services that would best serve each child, because we do truly believe in our school system that every child is an individual, why they call it an IEP, and every piece of the service needs to be individualized for that child. Trying to help people who control the purse strings to understand that is our challenge, as well as yours. That's it.

>> Ferz Janet?

>> That leads us to placements and programs in North Carolina.

>> As you already heard, 75% of our students that are deaf and hard of hearing live in rural areas of North Carolina, their services, programs they are offered often depend on what area of North Carolina they live in, if they are in close proximity to a large metropolitan year. There are two residential schools in North Carolina. We say, and this should have been put in quotes, a full continuum of services are offered in North Carolina, it depends on where in North Carolina you are.

>> Some areas you will get the whole continuum, all of them; in other areas you will only get what's available there. We have lots of gaps. Not all of the LEAs offer the full placement options for students. They are supposed to consider all of those options, but it often depends on what that LEA has in place at that time. Most of the time, if they are lucky they have an -- teacher there. They depend on a speech language path or an audiologist, someone else that may not have the education background in helping them make decisions about a student. Again, that depends on where you are in North Carolina, if you are close to a large city or not.

>> The programs and services that are in that local LEA tend to drive the placement of the student. Versus, the communication needs of the student and the individual needs of the student. Jen mentioned to you before in 2000 there was a big change in North Carolina, lots of different areas. One of the things that happened as a result of that is that there was a big memo that we call it, 2000 memo, the LEA is single port of entry for all Special Education opportunities, didn't differentiate in Deaf and hard of hearing. If they made a referral outside of the LEA they were saying in effect they couldn't provide services for the IEP. The result of that became that students had to fail in order to move through the continuum, which we know for deaf and hard of hearing is not the appropriate environment for those students. In the eight years since then we're having to reeducate a lot of people about what LRE means for whom people who are deaf and hard of hearing. From were many changes in personnel, many people had no experience in Deaf and hard of hearing. They just see what they read on a memo, follow the memo, they don't know deaf it or the low incident population, it's requiring a lot of education to the LEAs.

>> In North Carolina the LEA makes those decisions, they have local autonomy for the decision. The critical mass of students, agency access that serves Deaf and hard of hearing as well. We look at recommendations, one thing is to develop a systematic plan for making communication the focus for placement options. We have already developed a communication plan that is part of our exceptional children paperwork. It is highly recommended, not required, for all students who are deaf or hard of hearing. One thing we didn't get passed with our new procedures for exceptional children. We are in the process of developing a check list to help those rural areas to really consider all the options that are specific to deaf and hard of hearing students, accommodations, modifications that need to be made, lots of other things to consider, other than the typical, you know, sitting at the front of the classroom, or having an interpreter with you.

>> So we are in the process of developing the checklist for teachers of Deaf and hard of hearing so they can really think about the individual needs of the students. We are working on trying to train LEAs all over North Carolina to think what really it means by least-restrictive environments, and how that changes for a deaf student who needs that critical mass of peers.

>> We want to refocus that, really look at parental desires with their students. It happens in early intervention, three through five it tends to be whatever the LEA wants. So we want to try to refocus and really pay attention more to parental concerns, and their desires for their students.

>> Robin?

>> One more and we will break.

>> Rachel asked me to address the rural services that we have. So I asked -- to send a listserv, the DPI size, a lot of people responded, we don't have access to communication with each other because we are all so rural. I did not have a lot of response to the questionnaire, and I think part is because of the time frame. Head count was going on, people had to do IEPs, not responded to questionnaires, but it's preaching to the choir. We need money, we need qualified personnel, and as they talked about the speech/language therapists are not necessarily trained to work with our hard of hearing kids. Audiologists are contacted once a month. We are lucky to have one three days a week, not the norm. Most rural areas have itinerant teachers who serve once a week, twice a month. Needs are not being met. We are preaching to the choir what's going on. Once it's found on what's going on the questionnaire, they want another questionnaire, more research, more support, more workshops brought to them instead of driving four or five areas to go to a larger area where the workshops are being offered. The rural areas want things brought in. We are having to travel too far. I am in a county, we are not rural, you have golf courses, lots of money, yada-yada, we do, but the money doesn't go to the schools. We have very few deaf, hard hearing kids, it's the hard of hearing kids in our county that are being left behind. They can talk, don't need services. They can hear when they want to. You know that one.

>> The deaf kids, they look good in mainstream with that, interpreter, all they need. We know we have a lot of work left to do, it's preaching to the choir. We have information on the website, you can see if you have questions you can always contact us.

>> Like I said, I would be happy to give you the address, it's rather long, but our web site is [www.NCpublicschools.org/EC/instructional/deaf](http://www.NCpublicschools.org/EC/instructional/deaf)

>> We will be posting this February you, if you would -- posting this for you, again, [www.NCpublicschools.org/EC/instructional/deaf](http://www.NCpublicschools.org/EC/instructional/deaf)

>> I would be happy, any of us, if you would like to talk to us during the break or anytime while we are here, happy to discuss any of these issues with you. My guess is they are not unlike some of you guys. These are national issues for the most part. Thank you.

>> APPLAUSE.

>> We are running just a tad behind, so let's take a 20-minute break, but we will start exactly at 10:30. They are setting up copy, coffee, tea, will have decaf, it's a little delayed, but be back at 10:30 sharp.

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